



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Contact: Kristin Hollingsworth
301-652-1818

Federal Government Backs New Award Program To Promote Best Practices In Human Research Protection

Bethesda, MD: The Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has awarded a contract to the Health Improvement Institute to create a national awards program recognizing excellence in protection of human research subjects. The awards will become part of a public-private partnership that will encourage ongoing improvement in the nation's system for protection of human research subjects by giving visibility to best practices and by rewarding institutions, investigators, sponsors and review boards for their commitments to responsible conduct of human studies.

According to Greg Koski, Director OHRP, "These Awards for Excellence in Human Research Protection will encourage institutions, investigators and sponsors to continually improve their processes. For too long we have focused on regulatory compliance as an end in itself -- what we need to emphasize is prevention of harm. These awards will heighten awareness of these issues within the research community and among the general public, adding credibility to the research process and raising public confidence in research results. We believe that the research community, industry, and the American public share these goals and these awards will recognize the best among those who achieve them."

The Health Improvement Institute (HII) of Bethesda, Maryland -- a non-profit, tax exempt organization that promotes improving the quality and productivity of America's health care -- created this new series of awards. "There is excellent and ethical research being done throughout the United States and these new awards celebrate the individuals and organizations who do it best," said Dr. Peter Goldschmidt, President of the Health Improvement Institute.

An Advisory Board comprised of representatives from government, industry, the scientific community and advocacy groups will recommend awards that recognize: best practices, innovations in protecting research volunteers, and lifetime achievement for outstanding human research protection activities. A call for entries and nominations will be announced later this year.

***** continues...

The Health Improvement Institute is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality and productivity of America's health care. The Institute conducts forums on emerging treatments and sponsors national awards recognizing excellence in health communications.

The Office of Human Research Protections -- together with the Food and Drug Administration -- oversees programs for the protections of human subjects at more than 4,000 HHS-funded universities, hospitals and other medical and behavioral research institutions and private research sites in the United States and abroad. Just over a year old and based in the Office of the Secretary at HHS, OHRP is leading an effort to remodel the Federal oversight system, focusing on proactive education and quality improvement initiatives, together with enhanced compliance oversight and surveillance, to achieve greater effectiveness and accountability. To complement the government's oversight role, the Department has also promoted private, voluntary accreditation as a means to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of the system for protection of research participants.

For more information about the awards competition or becoming a sponsor of the awards program, please contact Kristin Hollingsworth at 301-652-1818 or by email kjh@mcman.com.

###

Health Improvement Institute <http://www.hii.org>
Dedicated to improving the quality and productivity of America's health care
5272 River Road, Suite 650 ■ Bethesda, MD 20816-1405
301-652-1818 (telephone) 301-652-1250 (fax) hii@mcman.com (email)

The Office of Human Research Protections, US DHHS (301) 496-7005 ohrp@osophs.dhhs.gov
The Tower Building 1101 Wootton Parkway, Suite 200, Rockville, Maryland 20852.